

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 25, 2012

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2490

Introduced by Assembly Member Butler

February 24, 2012

An act to add Article 6 (commencing with Section 2695) to Chapter 4 of Title 1 of Part 3 to the Penal Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 2490, as amended, Butler. ~~Veterans service officers: correctional facilities.~~ *Veterans: correctional counselors.*

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is responsible for administering various programs and services for the benefit of veterans. Existing law also authorizes each county board of supervisors to appoint a county veterans service officer to perform specified veterans-related services, including assisting veterans in pursuing claims for federal or state veterans’ benefits.

Existing law authorizes the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to employ correctional counselors. Existing law provides that correctional officers are peace officers, as specified.

This bill would require ~~a parole agent to be appointed as a veterans service officer that at any facility every state prison~~ that is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation *a correctional counselor shall be responsible for assisting veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for federal veterans’ benefits, or in establishing rights to any other privilege, preference, care, or compensation provided under federal or state law because of honorable service in the military.* ~~The veterans service officer would be responsible for assisting veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for veterans’~~

benefits, as specified. The bill would require the ~~veterans service officer assigned correctional counselor~~ to coordinate with ~~the United States Department of Veterans Affairs~~, the Department of Veterans Affairs; and county veterans service officers, ~~as specified or veterans service organizations in the county in which the prison is located for advice and assistance.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to help inmates
2 who have served in the military to access federal and state veterans'
3 benefits earned from military service so that inmates who have
4 served in the military are better equipped to successfully reintegrate
5 into the community, thereby reducing costs to the state.

6 SEC. 2. Article 6 (commencing with Section 2695) is added
7 to Chapter 4 of Title 1 of Part 3 of the Penal Code, to read:

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9 Article 6. ~~Veterans Service Officers~~ *In State Prisons*
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11 2695. ~~At any facility every state prison~~ that is under the
12 jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,
13 ~~there a correctional counselor shall be a parole agent who shall~~
14 ~~be appointed as a veterans service officer responsible for assisting~~
15 ~~veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for federal veterans'~~
16 ~~benefits, or in establishing rights to any other privilege, preference,~~
17 ~~care, or compensation provided under federal or state law because~~
18 ~~of honorable service in the military. The assigned correctional~~
19 ~~counselor shall coordinate with the Department of Veterans Affairs~~
20 ~~and the county veterans service officer or veterans service~~
21 ~~organizations, or both, in the county in which the prison is located~~
22 ~~for advice and assistance.~~

23 ~~2695.1. The veterans service officer shall be responsible for~~
24 ~~assisting veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for federal~~
25 ~~veterans' benefits, or in establishing rights to any other privilege,~~
26 ~~preference, care, or compensation provided under federal or state~~
27 ~~law because of honorable service in the military. The veterans~~
28 ~~service officer shall be authorized to appoint inmates who have~~
29 ~~served in the military to assist with these responsibilities.~~

1 ~~2695.3. The veterans service officer shall coordinate with the~~
2 ~~United States Department of Veterans Affairs in order to best~~
3 ~~access earned veterans' benefits.~~
4 ~~2695.4. The veterans service officer shall coordinate with the~~
5 ~~Department of Veterans Affairs and the county veterans service~~
6 ~~officer in the county in which the facility is located for advice,~~
7 ~~assistance, and training, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the~~
8 ~~program.~~

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